

Top Secret 219

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Saturday 23 September 1978

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NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION
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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Saturday, 23 September 1978

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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ARAB STATES: Steadfastness Summit

25X1 [] //Hardline Arab states, led by Syria, stepped up their efforts yesterday to form a broad Arab consensus opposed to the Camp David agreements. Libyan leader Qadhafi and Palestine Liberation Organization chief Arafat interrupted the hardliners' meeting in Damascus to meet with Jordan's King Hussein in northern Jordan.//

25X1 [] //The US Embassy in Damascus reports that the hardline leaders at the summit of the Steadfastness Front appear to be trying to avoid the rhetorical tirades that characterized previous Front summits. They are trying to draft a charter open to all Arab states that would affirm the need for unity and provide for joint military and economic measures.//

25X1 [] //The hardliners clearly hope they can dissuade Hussein from accepting the Camp David accords. During their meeting, Qadhafi probably offered financial inducements to Hussein to maintain his distance from the Camp David agreement. The relationship between Jordan and Libya has been improving over the past year.//

25X1 [] //There are numerous press reports that Hussein will join the Steadfast group as a result of his discussions with Arafat and Qadhafi, []

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25X1 [] The King has scheduled a press conference for today.//

25X1 [] //Arafat's presence at the meeting with the Jordanian King is surprising. Although he and Hussein met in Cairo in March 1977, they have had only limited contacts since the Jordanian Army drove Palestinian forces out of the country in 1970. The Jordanians had flatly refused to permit Arafat to visit Jordan since then, and Arafat's visit is likely to upset conservative East Bankers and the Army, which have bitter memories of the 1970 fighting. []

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LEBANON: Christian Position

25X1 [] *Lebanese Christian Maronite leaders have indicated a cautious willingness to consider a renewal--with modifications--of the mandate for the Syrian-dominated Arab Deterrent Force, which expires on 27 October. Christian moderates are apparently gaining ground over militants, who have categorically opposed renewal and threatened more fighting if their demands are not met.*

25X1 [] On Tuesday, the Lebanese Front--the umbrella organization that includes the Phalange and National Liberal Party--issued a statement saying that the Front opposed renewal of the Deterrent Force's mandate but would be willing to discuss certain government proposals about the Force. This statement came after a meeting of the Front's leaders, including National Liberal head Camille Shamun and Phalangist chief Pierre Jumayyil. Shamun and Pierre's son Bashir, the Phalangist militia commander, are militants who have called for an end to the peacekeeping force's mandate.

25X1 [] Later that day Pierre Jumayyil, after meeting with President Sarkis, said renewal of the mandate would seem to be in the interests of Lebanon and Syria, but added that changes in its terms were essential.

25X1 [] These remarks represent a significant softening of Shamun's recent statements and also indicate that Pierre has taken a more moderate line than Bashir. The elder Jumayyil has been equivocal about a continuation of the Syrian military presence but until now has generally sided with Bashir and the militants.

25X1 [] Discussion of the renewal of the mandate will probably focus on a compromise formula being drawn up by Sarkis; it calls for a reduction of Syrian Army positions in Beirut and their replacement by Lebanese Army and police units.

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[] The move toward moderation by the Maronite leaders may reflect only a tactical maneuver while they assess the impact of the Camp David accords on the situation in Lebanon. The emerging consensus could easily erode as the parties get down to specific issues--such as the size of the force, the length of the renewal, and whether Lebanese security forces will replace Syrian units in both the Christian and Muslim areas of Beirut.

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[] In the past, the Syrians have rejected Christian demands that Lebanese Army troops replace the Syrians only in Christian East Beirut, arguing that this would undermine Syria's image as an impartial peacekeeping force. The Syrians have warned Sarkis that, if he asks them to withdraw from one area of the country, they will pull out altogether. Most Lebanese Muslims and Palestinians oppose the stationing of units of the predominantly Christian Lebanese Army in Muslim West Beirut. []

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USSR: Reaction to Camp David

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[] Soviet President Brezhnev in a speech in Baku yesterday firmly rejected the Camp David agreements, but stopped short of other inflammatory charges that Soviet media have recently raised against US Middle Eastern policy. In choosing to emphasize the points he did, however, Brezhnev gave no indication the USSR feels that either the tone or the substance of bilateral relations has improved in recent weeks.

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[] The Soviet leader called the Camp David agreements a "new anti-Arab deal" between Israel and Egypt that has active US participation, and maintained that such attempts can only make the situation in the Middle East even more explosive. Although Brezhnev did not specifically mention Geneva, he recited the standard Soviet argument that there is only one true path to a final settlement and called for the participation of all interested parties--including the Palestine Liberation Organization--in any settlement.

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[] Implicitly criticizing Secretary Vance's tour of the Middle East, Brezhnev referred to attempts to compel other participants in the conflict to succumb to the terms of the agreements. *Pravda*, the Soviet party daily, yesterday went even further, saying the Secretary was putting "strong pressure" on

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King Hussein. Apparently referring to Jordanian and Saudi statements and to the meeting of the Arab Steadfastness Front in Damascus, Brezhnev said Vance's mission would not be easy. He did not, however, raise the charge that the US wants to insert its own forces into the region as recent Soviet commentary has alleged.

25X1 [redacted] Brezhnev's comments on bilateral relations conveyed a sense of continuing chill and placed the blame wholly on the US. On SALT, Brezhnev asserted that differences are "quite surmountable" and implied that a US lack of good will is all that has prevented agreement.

25X1 [redacted] The statements on SALT are consistent with Soviet public commentary this year, which has balanced a willingness to conclude an agreement with a somber assessment of US intentions. Brezhnev's statements yesterday are similar to those in his speeches in April when he expressed skepticism about US motives. Thus, Brezhnev is now less optimistic in public concerning SALT than he was in an interview last December in *Pravda*, when he described the prospects for an agreement as favorable.

25X1 [redacted] Brezhnev never referred specifically to US-China policy. The absence of a direct attack on "playing the China card" suggests the Soviets recognize that further belaboring of this point in public only serves to underscore Soviet ineffectiveness.

25X1 [redacted] Brezhnev also assailed US criticism of recent Soviet trials of dissidents, US newsmen, and International Harvester official Crawford. He defended Soviet courts for combatting unlawful activities, and asserted that the subsequent "loud propaganda campaign" in the US was a "flagrant violation" of the Helsinki agreements. [redacted]

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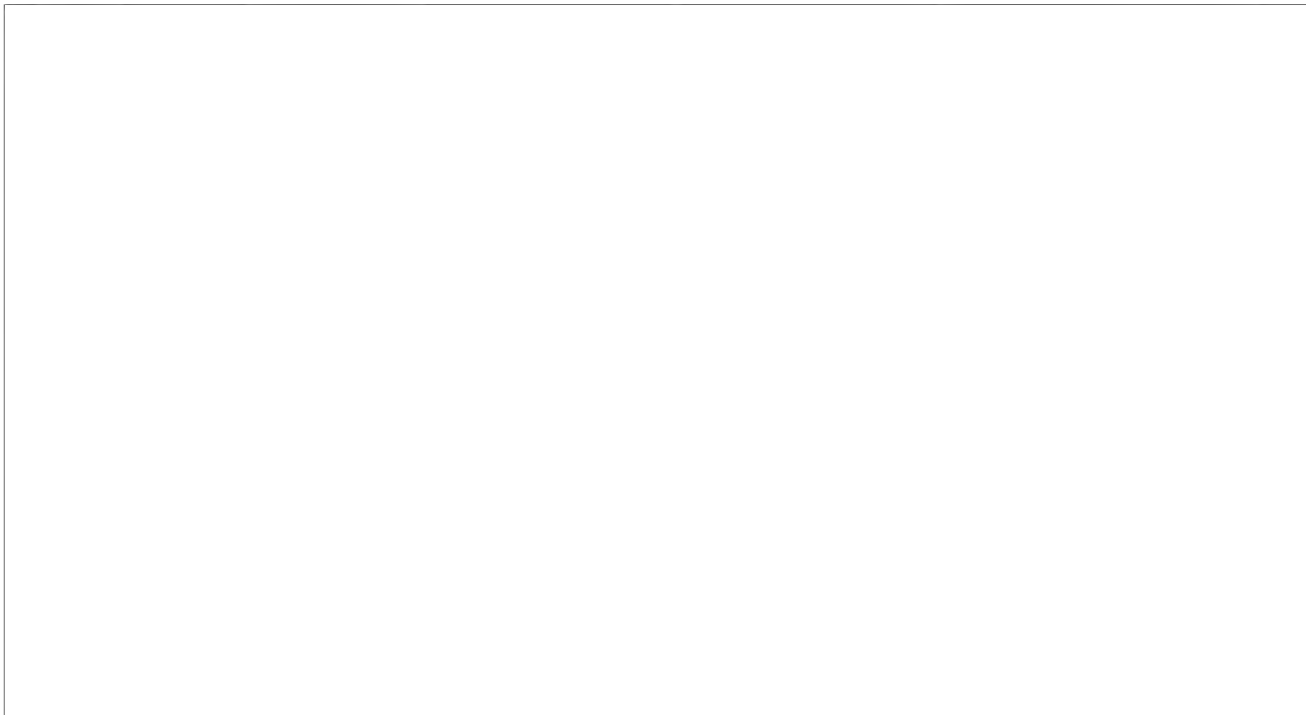
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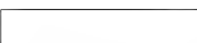
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**NAMIBIA: Election Preparations**

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 *South Africa's arrangements for conducting a Namibian election in late November conform with some of the points in the Western settlement proposal, although the plan contravenes the basic Western premise of UN participation in all phases of a transitional program. The arrangements, as well as official South African commentary, indicate that South Africa is trying to gain enough public sympathy in the West to counteract black African pressures for UN sanctions.*

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 The voting in Namibia will be for parties, not individual candidates. The number of seats in a 50-member constituent assembly that a party may win will be proportional to its share of the votes cast throughout the territory. This provision, along with the voter registration that began in June, conforms in theory with the stipulations in the Western settlement proposal that all adult Namibians be eligible to vote and that the election be held for the whole of Namibia as one political entity.

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[] The South African Administrator General for Namibia has announced that he is inviting the UN Secretary General and the five Western members of the UN Security Council to send observers "in order to satisfy themselves as to the fairness of the process." The South African arrangements, however, do not meet the Western stipulations that a UN task force participate in a seven-month preparatory period to assure that all political prisoners are released, all refugees are enabled to return, all repressive or discriminatory laws are revoked, and that freedom of speech, assembly, movement, and press are guaranteed.

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[] Namibian political groups must register by 11 October in order to compete in the election, which is scheduled for five days beginning 20 November. The official explanation for the deadline is that time must be provided for printing the names of duly registered parties on the ballots. The early deadline could also provide a legal basis for restricting the activities of the South-West Africa People's Organization and other groups that say they intend to boycott the election.

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[] The South Africans are making extensive efforts to get out the vote. Some 1,100 polling stations will be set up to assure that inhabitants in even the most remote areas of the territory can conveniently cast their ballots.

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[] No doubt the South Africans realize that announcement of an election to be held without a truce with SWAPO and without a UN-monitored withdrawal of South African troops will provoke the African group at the UN to demand additional sanctions against South Africa. Representatives of the front-line states and Nigeria have already indicated that they will press for a Security Council resolution next week that adopts the Secretary General's recommendations for a Namibian settlement and at least threatens additional sanctions if the South Africans obstruct UN participation. []

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SENEGAL: Succession Struggle

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[] *Senegalese President Senghor, who may soon retire despite his recent denial that his health is failing, moved this*

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week against dissidents in the ruling party who hope to bloc his designated constitutional successor--Prime Minister Diouf--from taking office.

25X1 [] //Senghor replaced Babacar Ba, Diouf's chief rival and the strongest alternative claimant, as foreign minister and is mounting a campaign to embarrass Ba politically. This will not eliminate opposition to Diouf and could even stimulate greater restiveness among his antagonists. Senghor's action will probably reinforce the view that Diouf is a self-effacing creature of the President without a strong political base of his own who cannot claim a mandate to lead Senegal.//

25X1 [] Factions in Senghor's party as well as minor opposition parties and top Army leaders are contesting Diouf's automatic succession. The military will be the final arbiter if there is a protracted succession squabble, and Senghor will clearly resist pressure to revise the constitution to provide for a new presidential election once he steps down.

25X1 [] Ba apparently remains a party member and is still a powerful political figure. We do not know how the Army views Ba's dismissal. His civilian supporters are unhappy but have not organized demonstrations on his behalf. [] 25X1

ECUADOR: Election in the Balance

25X1 [] *The announcement last night by Ecuador's Supreme Electoral Tribunal of widespread voting irregularities and fraud in the first round of presidential balloting held last July could set the stage for canceling the election. The conduct of the tribunal--which has been manipulated behind the scenes by some high-ranking military officers--has prompted strong reaction from political parties and the media, but the plotters may still be able to deprive populist candidate Jaime Roldos of a near-certain second-round election victory.*

25X1 [] The charges were made on behalf of the tribunal by its newly appointed president, Rafael Arizaga. Arizaga--considered a tool of Supreme Council member General Duran and Government Minister Jarrin, who want to abort the election--replaced Jose Baquero de la Calle last week following a disagreement over the extent and seriousness of the election violations.

25X1 [] The next move in the election proceedings--which already have seen the disqualification of four formally announced candidates--is now up to the government. A group of officers opposed to the Duran-Jarrin plot is said to want a high-level military review of the tribunal's findings. Duran and Jarrin, fearing the judgment of their military peers, are reported to be pressing for an immediate annulment of the election.

25X1 [] President Poveda is the key to solving the election dispute. He has tied his prestige and credibility as president to a successful and honorable conclusion of the election process. We believe that he can still count on the support of a number of ranking officers. The media and political leaders of various persuasions also appear ready to rally to his side.

25X1 [] Nonetheless, some reports indicate that in the past few weeks Poveda has become resigned to canceling the elections, and forces favoring a continuation of the election process must now prevail upon the President to lead an 11th-hour effort to foil the conspiracy. [] 25X1
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BRIEFS

Poland-Czechoslovakia

25X1 [] Earlier this week, Polish and Czechoslovak dissidents held their second secret meeting in northern Czechoslovakia since early August.

25X1 [] Polish dissident leader Jacek Kuron gave Western journalists in Warsaw the communique from the meeting. The two sides agreed to set up permanent working groups in order to exchange information quickly and to ensure cooperation. The dissidents also discussed convening a "political study seminar about independent civic activities in Eastern Europe."

25X1 [] It is unclear whether Polish and Czechoslovak police deliberately chose not to prevent the meeting from taking place, or whether they were unaware of when or where it would occur. Kuron's apartment has since been searched and some of his papers confiscated.

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[redacted] The authorities have apparently taken no repressive measures against the participants in the initial meeting, but both regimes probably will now feel compelled to act forcefully in order to counter the direct challenge of such active and open cooperation. [redacted]

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Portugal

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[redacted] In a speech to the nation last night, Portuguese President Eanes asked the country's political parties to come to an agreement so that a stable majority could be established in parliament. If the parties cannot reach such an agreement, Eanes suggested the nomination of a prime minister who would form a government without a formal coalition but with the participation of party members. Otherwise, Eanes said he would propose a government to prepare for an election in 1980 or dissolve the parliament and call an election as soon as possible.

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[redacted] Eanes is giving the parties time to deliberate, and some reports suggest that they will be less rigid than they were in the negotiations prior to the designation of Prime Minister Nobre da Costa. [redacted]

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